

Brad Young Recognition--2013
Presented by Commissioner Lambe
The Vernon C. Applegate Award for Outstanding Contributions to
sea lamprey Control

On behalf of the commission I am pleased to present the Vernon Applegate award for outstanding contributions to sea lamprey control to Dr. Brad Young of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

This award is named after Vern Applegate, who was perhaps best known for his commitment to, and demands for, excellence in science. Vern Applegate led the charge to understand the sea lamprey's life cycle and to find solutions to the infestation. He succeeded on both counts! We honor individuals who, in the spirit of Vern Applegate, make it their mission to address the sea lamprey curse.

Brad Young has actually made distinguished contributions to sea lamprey control in two regions North America: here in Great Lakes and in Lake Champlain, where he currently works on the Lake Champlain sea lamprey control program

So, he also represents the first time this award has been presented to someone outside of the Great Lakes. But it is worth pointing out that Brad cut his teeth here in the Great Lakes region, working out of the Hammond Bay Biological station. At Hammond Bay, as an MSU post-doc under Weiming Li, his work led us to better understand how and when pheromones are released in sea lampreys. This, of course, helped set some groundwork for the current, intensive research into sea lamprey pheromones as a control technique.

Like the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain has a terrible sea lamprey problem. Brad was tapped to come to that region and help tackle the issues there.

By all accounts, Brad has been an integral leader in sea lamprey control and the restoration of the Lake Champlain fisheries.

In fact, he has earned the strong respect of those in the basin who depend on a healthy and vibrant fishery. Brad was nominated for this award by an individual from the Lake Champlain region who wrote: "Dr. Young's dedication to sea lamprey control on Lake Champlain has led to a level of leadership on the issue not been seen before in this region. This leadership has led to a better understanding of the importance of lamprey control by the public, and state and local governments."

Brad takes an holistic approach to sea lamprey control, applying his knowledge and the tools available to attack sea lampreys aggressively. Hammond Bay and Weiming Li trained him well--he uses the best science available and manages a top-notch staff such that Lake Champlain has seen marked declines in sea lamprey abundances.

Brad is continually looking for better ways to control the pest. He has developed and maintained well-establishing connections with fellow biologists and scientists from around the nation in an effort to strategically import innovative lamprey control techniques and scientific methods to Lake Champlain

We also note his considerable skill interacting with the public—always a critical component of fishery management. The Lake Champlain sea lamprey control program, which is far newer than the Great Lakes program, has some vocal opponents. Despite disagreements from those opponents, Brad has worked hard to expand and strengthen relationships with stakeholders and partners, including state agencies and non-profit organizations. Much like Vernon Applegate in the 1950s, who first had to educate people about the need for sea lamprey control, Brad understands that personal contacts and good relationships is essential to success.

Leading through example, Brad demonstrates his commitment to the health of Lake Champlain's fisheries by volunteering his personal time every year to serve as a weigh captain in the Lake Champlain International Father's Day Fishing Derby, a 6,000-person event. He uses this time to interact with hundreds of anglers while weighing fish. He engages the public directly and shares his passion with fellow lake and fishing enthusiasts who are concerned about the health of the lake.

Sea lamprey populations in Lake Champlain have decreased significantly in the past few decades, meeting and exceeding wounding rate goals for lake trout and Atlantic salmon. It is because of Brad's diligence, leadership, selflessness, and strategic persistence that the people of the Lake Champlain region have seen the sea lamprey problem addressed.

We in the Great Lakes region are proud to note Brad's roots and even prouder that he has been such an important leader in the Lake Champlain region. So, on behalf of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, I am proud to present the 2013 Vernon Applegate Award for Outstanding Contributions to Sea Lamprey Control to Dr. Brad Young.